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EDUCATION EMPLOYMENT
LINKAGES

Education Employment Linkages: Perspectives from Employer-Led Channels

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Abstract

This report presents results from a series of key informant interviews carried out in 2009 about employer-led channels for helping young New Zealanders make effective education-employment linkages during their transition years. Employers have become more connected to education institutions, motivated in part by serious skills shortages that emerged over the last decade. Career Services is recognised as a superb source of reliable career information, advice and guidance, whose services could be more widely used. The interviews revealed a concern that large numbers of young New Zealanders undervalue the positive benefits that can be achieved with good quality career guidance. There was wide support for further development of careers education in secondary and in tertiary education institutions. Another theme concerned finding ways to better manage relationships between educators and employers, including the greater use of specialist brokers. Finally, participants emphasised again and again the importance of supporting effective systems for helping young people to imagine different possibilities for their career development, and for helping them to develop skills for exploring and assessing a full range of opportunities as they construct their own career pathways.

Acknowledgements

The author is very grateful to the people involved in helping young people in New Zealand make good education employment linkages and who agreed to be interviewed for this report (see Appendix 2). I am also very grateful to the members of the project's external reference group that provided advice on this phase of the research at a seminar held in Wellington on 24 July 2009: Janis Freegard, Matt Freeland and Matalena Leaupepe (Career Services); Paul Barker, Damian O'Neill and Linda Sorensen (Department of Labour); Jocelyn Anton (Ministry of Education); Dillon Burke, Doug Gorman, Jon Saunders and Daniel Soughton (Ministry of Social Development); Marten Hutt (Ministry of Youth Development); Anne Hardman and Sharmaine Nolan (Te Puni Kōkiri); and Che Tibby and Felicity Wong (Tertiary Education Commission). A research workshop in February 2010 with my EEL colleagues provided very valuable feedback on an initial analysis of the interview material, and I am very grateful to Jane Higgins, Hazel Phillips and Karen Vaughan for their generous insights. I am also grateful to the workshop facilitator, Margaret Hanson, for her professional expertise in helping us to bring our diverse research threads together.

The author welcomes any feedback on the report, which can be sent to:

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Executive Summary

Introduction

1. In 2009, each member of the research team undertook a series of semi-structured interviews with key informants under their respective headings. The purpose of the interviews was to draw on the participants' experience and expertise to gain insights into how current support systems help young New Zealanders make good education employment linkages. This included 30 interviews by the author with 41 people from different parts of New Zealand who have important roles in employer-led channels. This report presents the author's analysis of material gathered in those 30 interviews.

2. Employer-led channels are systems that begin with direct contact with employers and use these contacts to channel information to young people in secondary school or in further education or training. These systems are located at different sites. Employer groups themselves are an obvious example. Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) provide leadership within the industry on matters relating to skill and training. Public providers of further education and training – particularly universities, institutes of technology and polytechnics – have dedicated officers employed to assist their students, or their potential students, make good education employment linkages. Certain government agencies play key roles in gathering and disseminating education employment information; most notably Career Services.

3. The primary research method was to conduct semi-structured interviews with key informants from different parts of the country, including people from the above sectors. The interviews took place between 10 September and 2 December 2009. There were six interviews with employer groups; nine interviews with ITOs; six interviews with universities; five interviews with institutes of technology or polytechnics; and four interviews with organisations from central or local government. One-third of the interviews were from people located in the South Island, and two-thirds were in the North Island. The largest groups were from Auckland, Wellington and Otago (17 per cent each).

The Employer Landscape

4. Employer-led channels must begin with a mechanism for collecting information from employers, most of whom are managers of small businesses with fewer than six employees. Recognising this, standard practice in New Zealand is for career information on industries to be collected and distributed by a government agency. This is now the responsibility of Career Services.

5. The peak organisation for employers is Business New Zealand, which is concerned to strengthen relationships between education and business. Throughout New Zealand there are a large number of industrial associations. Tertiary education organisations have begun to use these associations to provide feedback on their education programmes. This is typically achieved by asking them to nominate a representative on an employers' reference group.

6. Because industry training is 'provided for people employed in an industry' ITOs originally paid little attention to schools in order to focus on workers in industry employment. In recent years, this approach has changed as many ITOs have recognised that skills leadership includes engaging with schools to ensure that students are aware of industry training options that might become part of their learning and career pathways.

Students and Career Guidance

7. People interviewed for this project often placed the young person at the centre of the issue. Five participants argued strongly, for example, that career guidance should aim to help young people discover and develop their *whole* person, and not simply vocational or professional skills. Another constant theme expressed concern about young people who become disengaged from education and skills development in their early teens.

8. In this context, there was general support that students can benefit from making direct links with employers, or learning about employer expectations, early in their secondary and tertiary studies. Such links can help motivate study and encourage independent learning based on good planning, and may also help students to consider what extra-curricular activities they might develop for their career aspirations.

9. Two general sets of comments were made. The first set emphasised the importance of stimulating young people to *explore* their potential capabilities and to *imagine* a range of different possibilities for their future pathways. The second set emphasised the importance of preparing trustworthy career education resources targeted at young people, particularly with the aim of helping young persons to consider a full range of different options. The Career Services website was cited as an excellent example.

10. Participants suggested that a large number of young people leave school with no appreciation of the potential value of good professional career advice and guidance. Many students in the middle of the scholastic range at school regard themselves as neither struggling nor very bright, and so think they do not need career guidance. Students who do not value career guidance may 'drift' into a course of study without developing effective career management skills and with little contact with employers. Consequently, a strong theme to come through the interviews was the suggestion that personal career education is important for everyone.

Employers and Industry Training Organisations

11. There has been a movement towards greater connections between employer groups and education institutions. There was a wide range of opinions expressed about the willingness of employers to be involved in career education. Eight suggested that employers will become involved if they are provided with a reason for involvement, and if their time is used efficiently with clear boundaries on the extent of their commitment.

12. Half of the interviews included comments that were supportive of more links or stronger partnerships between secondary schools and local employers, with some being particularly forceful in their opinion that this would be valuable for students (and for their transition pathways) and for the involved employers. Six interviewees suggested that 'brokered relationships' would work best, in which a specialist consultant or organisation ensures that any initiatives successfully promote the objectives of everyone involved.

13. Several interviews commented favourably on existing programmes, such as Gateway, for linking employers and schools. Five interviews suggested that a school might set up an advisory committee of its local employers, or host a school breakfast for this group, to strengthen linkages with the school's business community.

14. People reported no serious issues about education employment linkages for people who are undergoing training under ITO supervision. The qualifications are intended to meet industry needs, and the trainees are in employment (and so connected directly to employers). People who ask an ITO about career pathways in a sector can be referred to industry employers, or their websites, for reliable information and advice.

15. One caveat to this positive assessment concerns how young people in schools obtain information about skills-based career opportunities in the industries covered by ITOs. All the people interviewed from the ITO sector described major investments by ITOs in preparing resources for secondary schools. Almost all of these descriptions were accompanied by a comment that this work receives no direct funding from government.

16. ITOs have begun developing unit standards suitable for delivery by secondary schools and have set up processes for delivering and moderating these standards. In some cases, individual ITOs have combined in order to produce learning materials for schools.

Universities and Institutes of Technology or Polytechnics

17. These public institutions play two important roles in employer-led channels for assisting young people make good education-employment linkages. First, they provide material to potential recruits. Second, they provide career education and career guidance services to students enrolled in their courses.

18. A question addressed in the interviews was whether information distributed by these tertiary institutions to prospective students (in printed give-away material or on the institution's website) undergoes any formal quality assurance process. The answer is generally not.

19. The recruitment officers were clear that they do not attempt to offer career advice or course advice to prospective students. Rather, their role is to market programmes as best they can. If a potential student asks for career advice, he or she is referred to the institution's careers office, since that is where the qualified advisors reside.

20. Once a student begins a course of study, there are four key moments at which they may have some contact with the institution's careers office: (1) in their first weeks of arrival when the office joins in welcoming and orientation events; (2) if they discover early in their course that they need to revisit their education choices; (3) if they are required to participate in some form of work-based learning; and (4) as they near the end of their course and are seeking employment to match their new qualifications.

21. The interviews revealed four areas where it was suggested there is potential for systematic improvements. The first area concerns curriculum design, in which the careers office could draw on their experience and networks to provide feedback from employers to educators.

22. The second area concerns a significant number of students who can 'drift' into their course of study at university without realising the value of thinking about developing

effective career management skills. Careers advisors in the interviews noted that some of their clients do later regret the time it took for them to seek career guidance or to learn techniques for framing their career choices.

23. The third area concerns the tracking of the achievements of different programmes in preparing their graduates for employment. It was suggested that there should be published data on completion rates and graduate outcomes so that potential students can incorporate this information in making their choices

24. The fourth area concerns perceptions that career advice given to young people in New Zealand (both formal guidance by careers advisors and informal advice by family and friends) generally undervalues trades education in favour of university education. There have been some recent initiatives to address this perceived imbalance in career advice.

Secondary Schools and Career Education

25. It is important to emphasise that the 'employer-led channels' theme of this research did not incorporate interviews with key informants from school communities. Nevertheless, the interviews provided valuable feedback on how career education in secondary schools is perceived by outsiders closely involved in helping young people in transition.

26. The interviews were replete with examples of recent initiatives in schools that participants described as exciting and valuable for students. There were several general statements commenting that careers advisors in schools are doing okay in what is a difficult job, and are typically enthusiastic about cooperating in projects that they think will benefit their students.

27. People spoke highly of some schools where the careers office is a strong team of qualified professionals offering a range of skills and services to their students, with full support from the principal. There was also a strong theme, however, that not all secondary students have valuable experiences with their careers office.

28. Possible ways to address this issue can be grouped into two types of response. The first group of responses suggested that careers offices in schools need more resources that are ring-fenced for providing better career advice and guidance. The second group of responses suggested that careers offices should be more focused on career *education*, rather than providing career *guidance* (especially if their professional qualifications are as educators).

Conclusion

29. There was considerable support in the interviews for the proposition that New Zealand needs to create better systems for careers education, and for improving employer-led channels of information to young people. Chapter 7 gives a précis of the major themes that emerged in the interviews, already summarised in previous paragraphs of this executive summary.

Chapter 1

Introduction

The education employment linkages (EEL) research programme is a five-year research programme that has been funded by the Foundation for Research, Science and Technology since July 2007 (see Dalziel *et al*, 2007, and www.eel.org.nz). The EEL research programme seeks to provide new knowledge about issues affecting young people's education and employment choices as they move from school to work, with a particular aim to investigate how formal support systems best help young New Zealanders make good education employment linkages to benefit themselves, their communities, and the national economy. The research is taking place under four integrated headings led by different members of the research team: school communities (Karen Vaughan); regional communities (Jane Higgins); Māori and Pasifika communities (Hazel Phillips); and employer-led channels (Paul Dalziel).

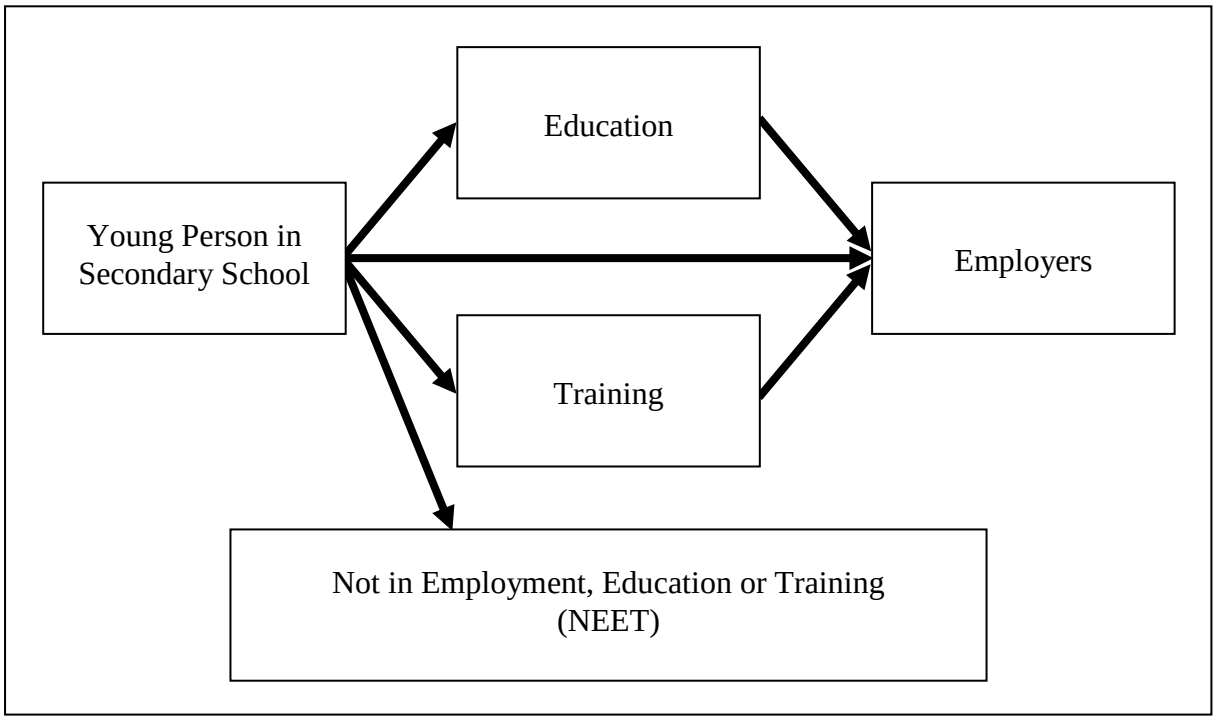
In 2009, each member of the research team undertook a series of semi-structured interviews with key informants under their respective headings. The purpose of the interviews was to draw on the participants' experience and expertise to gain insights into how current support systems help young New Zealanders make good education employment linkages. This included 30 interviews by the author with 41 people from different parts of New Zealand who have important roles in employer-led channels. This report presents the author's analysis of material gathered in those 30 interviews.

The remainder of this chapter begins with an explanation in section 1.1 of how the EEL research programme defines employer-led channels. Section 1.2 then explains how the semi-structured interviews were carried out, and provides some summary statistics about the range of participants (by geographical region and sector). Chapter 2 provides some background material on the employer landscape. Subsequent chapters then present results drawn from the interviews under the following headings: students and career guidance (chapter 3); employers and industry training organisations (chapter 4); universities and institutes of technology or polytechnics (chapter 5); and secondary schools and career education (chapter 6). The report finishes with a brief conclusion in chapter 7.

1.1 Employer-Led Channels

School-leavers who want to engage in further education or training typically need information about employment opportunities and employer expectations in order to make good choices. It may not be easy for individuals to obtain such information using their own resources, and so governments devote considerable resources to creating and operating systems to help their citizens evaluate different career pathway options (see Higgins *et al*, 2008, and its references). Figure 1 provides a stylised diagram of a student's transition years. It is 'stylised' because simple linear transition pathways such as those depicted in the figure are not as common for the modern generation of young people as they once were. Nevertheless, the figure captures key components of the process. On leaving school, the young person might choose to enrol in further 'education' (leading to degree qualifications) or in further 'training' (leading to vocational qualifications). They might also move directly into employment, or fall under the residual heading of 'not in employment, education or training'.

Figure 1
School-to-Work Transitions



Source: Dalziel (2010a, Figure 3).

Considering how young people obtain reliable information about career pathway options, there are a number of obvious sites of engagement. First, schools themselves devote considerable resources to this task; the National Administration Guidelines for New Zealand schools, for example, require 'appropriate career education and guidance for all students in year 7 and above' (MoE, 2009a, NAG 1f). Regional communities, and Māori and Pasifika communities, participate in a wide range of programmes to enhance the participation of their youth in employment, education or training. These community initiatives, including initiatives in school communities, are the subject of other reports being written in the EEL Research Report series.

Another set of systems may be described as 'employer-led channels'. These are systems that begin with direct contact with employers and use these contacts to channel information to young people in secondary school or in further education or training. These systems are located at different sites. Employer groups themselves are an obvious example. Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) are set up by industry and recognised by government (among other things) to 'provide leadership within the industry on matters relating to skill and training needs' (Industry Training Act, 1992, section 6(c)). Public providers of further education and training – particularly universities, institutes of technology and polytechnics – have dedicated officers employed to assist their students, or their potential students, make good education employment linkages. Certain government agencies play key roles in gathering and disseminating education employment information; most notably Career Services (see *www.careerservices.govt.nz*).

A previous EEL Research Report (Vaughan *et al*, 2009) has described key elements in systems that make up employer-led channels. These elements are reproduced in Table 1. They are grouped under four major components:

1. Information creation and organisation.
2. Advice, guidance and education.
3. Education employment linkages.
4. System policies and regulation.

The 7 to 9 elements in each component may be performed by different agencies; indeed in some cases this is highly desirable (quality assurance, for example, is likely to be best done by an agency that is independent from the agency that prepares a resource). The purpose of the key informant interviews carried out for this report was to understand some of the strengths and weaknesses in New Zealand's current systems of employer-led channels for helping young people make good education employment linkages during their transition years. The research design of these interviews is explained in the next section.

Table 1
Elements of Employer-Led Channels

Information Creation and Organisation	**Advice, Guidance and Education**
1.01 Data Collection	2.01 Individual Drop-In Advice
1.02 Data Analysis	2.02 E-mail Queries
1.03 Data Collation	2.03 Guidance Appointments
1.04 Resource Preparation	2.04 Course Advice
1.05 Quality Assurance	2.05 Job Search Skills
1.06 Resources Library	2.06 Career Education
1.07 Private Website	2.07 Individual Identity Work
1.08 Public Website	2.08 Individual Social Support
1.09 Promotional Material	2.09 Family Support
Education Employment Linkages	**System Policies and Regulation**
3.01 Career Expos	4.01 Policy Submissions
3.02 Employer Visits	4.02 Policy Advice
3.03 Vacancy Notices	4.03 Programme Funding
3.04 Curriculum Relevance	4.04 Education Standards
3.05 Work Experience	4.05 Professional Standards
3.06 Work-Based Learning	4.06 Standards Monitoring
3.07 Student Placement with Employers	4.07 Disciplinary Procedures
3.08 Post-Placement Support	
3.09 Graduation Tracking	

Source: Vaughan *et al.* (2009, Table 2).

1.2 The Key Informant Interviews

The research design for this component of the EEL research programme was discussed at a Wellington seminar of the programme's External Reference Group of policy advisors on 24 July 2009. The key research question agreed at the seminar was the following:

> Under our current systems, how can young people (and their advisors) access reliable and comprehensive information (data and analysis) about employment opportunities, as they make their education choices, paying particular attention to the roles of:
>
> - Universities;
> - Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics; and
> - Industry Training Organisations?

The primary research method was to conduct semi-structured interviews with key informants from different parts of the country, including people from the above three sectors, people from employer groups, and people from relevant government agencies. The interviews took place between 10 September and 2 December 2009. In most cases the interview was held at the participant's place of work, although one was held at the participant's home, two were held in the author's office, one was held in a public café, one was held by telephone, and one was held at a conference.

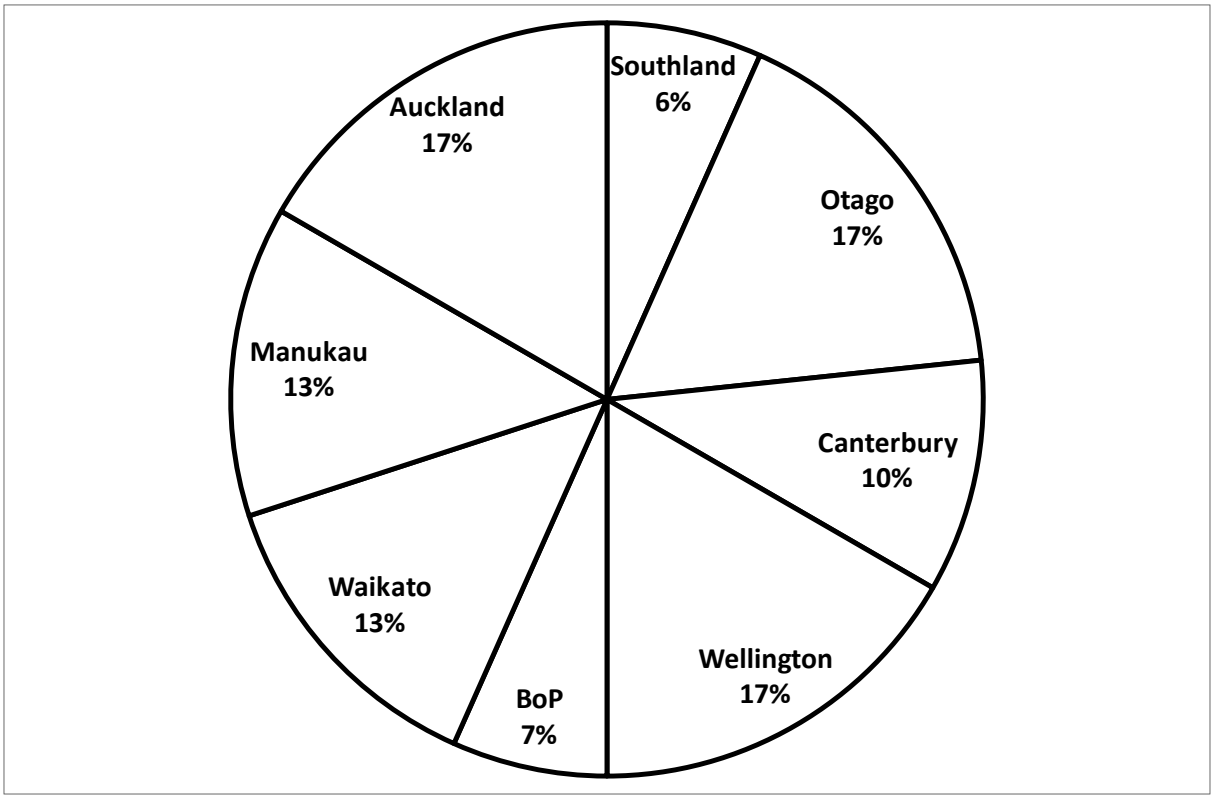
Participants were provided with a two page document providing background on the research and a series of nine general questions that would be used to structure the interview. This document is reproduced as Appendix 1 of this report. It included a statement that: 'The report will list the names of the people who agree for an interview (unless anonymity is requested), but nothing from the interviews will be published that could identify the person or his or her institution.' No one did request anonymity, and the list of participants is provided in Appendix 2. In total, 41 people gave of their time in 30 interviews.

Table 2
Categories of Interviews

Category	**Number**
Employer Groups	6
Industry Training Organisations (ITOs)	9
Universities	6
Institutes of Technology or Polytechnics (ITPs)	5
Central or Local Government	4
TOTAL INTERVIEWS	**30**

Table 2 presents the distribution of the interviews among the five major sites for employer-led channels. There were six interviews with employer groups; nine interviews with industry training organisations (ITOs); six interviews with universities; five interviews with institutes of technology or polytechnics (ITPs); and four interviews with organisations from central or local government. Figure 2 presents the geographical distribution of the interviews. One-third of the interviews were from people located in the South Island, and two-thirds were in the North Island. The largest groups were from Auckland, Wellington and Otago (17 per cent each).

Figure 2
Geographical Distribution of the Interviews



Each interview typically lasted between 30 and 45 minutes. The author took extensive written notes during the interview, but the interview was not taped. The written notes were coded into 127 different points, which were then categorised under 16 headings. The author prepared a table showing how many interviews from each of the categories in table 2 had made a comment on each of the 127 different points. This analysis was presented to a research workshop of the whole EEL research group held 16-18 February 2010. Drawing on feedback from that workshop, the headings were further refined by the author, which produced the structure of this report.

The EEL research programme approaches research validity in terms of Cresswell and Miller's (2000) concept of the 'lens of the researcher, lens of the research participants, and lens of people external to the research' (Dalziel *et al*, 2007, p. 7). This report analyses the interview material through the lens of the research leader for the employer-led channels component of

the larger project, with input from other members of the research team. This report will be sent to all those who took part in an interview with an invitation to provide comments and other feedback on its content. This accountability is to enhance validity through the lens of the research participants. The themes of the research were presented to a workshop of public policy advisors on the research programme's external reference group in June 2010 and this report will be sent to a small group of international experts who have agreed to help monitor the project. These exercises address validity through the lens of people external to the research.

Chapter 2

The Employer Landscape

It is possible to overstate the separate character of employers in the way young people are helped to make effective education employment linkages. Employers are also parents, grandparents, aunties, uncles and family friends. Boards of trustees for schools often include members with links into the business community. Employers live in regional communities, and some are strongly connected with Māori and Pasifika communities. Through these local family and community networks, individual employers are helping individual students learn about the world of work and how its features might influence their education choices. In this research programme, however, the aim is to go beyond such individual encounters to explore how formal support *systems* can best help young New Zealanders make good education employment linkages to benefit themselves, their communities, and the national economy. In the employer-led theme of the programme, the aim is to research and deliver new knowledge about *systems* for conveying the needs of employers to young New Zealanders, in order to improve education employment linkages (Dalziel *et al*, 2007).

It is widely recognised that a feature of the employer landscape in New Zealand is that the country's businesses are predominantly small and medium-sized enterprises, or SMEs (Long *et al*, 2000; Coetzer, 2002; Vaughan, 2002; Fraser, 2005; TEC, 2005; Coetzer, 2007; Coetzer *et al*, 2007; Massey and Ingley, 2007; Dalziel, 2010b and 2010c). Two-thirds of New Zealand enterprises have zero employees, and almost two thirds of the remaining businesses that do employ staff have no more than five employees (MED, 2009). Table 3 presents data on the distribution of employing enterprises as at February 2008 – more than 90 per cent employ between 1 and 19 employees, and only 1.4 per cent employ 100 staff or more.

Table 3 Number of Employing Enterprises by Number of Employees, February 2008

Employee Size Group	Number of Enterprises	Percentage of All Enterprises with Employees	Cumulative Percentage
1-5	100,459	66.2%	66.2%
6-9	20,526	13.5%	79.8%
10-19	16,771	11.1%	90.8%
20-49	9,104	6.0%	96.8%
50-99	2,579	1.7%	98.5%
100-499	1,859	1.2%	99.8%
500+	340	0.2%	100.0%
TOTAL	**151,638**	**100%**	

Source: MED (2009, p. 9).

This is significant. If employer-led channels are to be effective, they must begin with a mechanism for collecting information from employers, most of whom are managers of small businesses with fewer than six employees. Recognising this, standard practice in New Zealand since the 1940s has been for career information on industries to be collected and distributed by a government agency. This is now the responsibility of Career Services, which describes itself as a government organisation to provide all people living in New Zealand with access to the best careers information, advice and guidance to achieve their life goals (*www.careers.govt.nz*). This includes promoting the importance of lifelong career planning. The Career Services website currently publishes more than 70 profiles on New Zealand industries, including trends, facts and statistics, training information, and the sorts of jobs people do (see *http://www2.careers.govt.nz/job_interest_areas.html*).

The peak organisation for employers is Business New Zealand (*www.businessnz.org.nz*). It has been concerned for several years to strengthen relationships between education and business, driven in part by the serious skills shortages that emerged in many sectors before the current recession (Dalziel, 2007). The following extract from Chief Executive of Business New Zealand illustrates this concern (O'Reilly, 2006, p. 3):

> In many cases, schools and local business have a great relationship. I've seen many examples around the country and I congratulate them on what they have achieved. My concern is that not all schools and business enjoy such engagement. Engagement is not systematic across the board. The connections are often dependent on the individuals involved and these linkages are too important to be left to rely on personalities. I would like to see a process by which we could draw out the elements that contribute to successful engagement between a school and local enterprise and then take those lessons nationally.

Business New Zealand is sustained by four regional organisations: The Employers' and Manufacturers' Association (Northern); the Employers' and Manufacturers' Association (Central); the Canterbury Employers' Chamber of Commerce; and the Otago-Southland Employers' Association. Throughout New Zealand there are a large number of industrial associations, ranging from large national organisations such as Federated Farmers of New Zealand to small organisations of local employers. Tertiary education organisations have begun to use these associations to provide feedback on their education programmes. This is typically achieved by asking them to nominate a representative on an employers' reference group, often set up at the faculty level but increasingly at the level of individual programmes. These groups meet at least once a year to consider how faculty programmes might better address local employer needs.

An industry in New Zealand is able to create an Industry Training Organisation (ITO) recognised under the Industry Training Act 1992. There are currently 39 ITOs in New Zealand, which are collectively represented on policy issues by the Industry Training Federation (ITF; see *www.itf.org.nz*). Section 6 of the Act defines four roles for an ITO:

> (a) Set for the industry in respect of which the organisation wishes to be recognised (or that industry and the other industry or industries concerned) skill standards that the qualifications authority is likely to be prepared to register; and
>
> (b) develop arrangements for the delivery of industry training that will enable trainees to attain those standards, including arrangements (being arrangements likely to be acceptable to the qualifications authority) for—
>
> (i) The monitoring of the training so as to ensure that it enables trainees to attain those standards; and

(ii) The assessing of trainees and of the extent to which they have in fact attained those standards ; and

(c) provide leadership within the industry on matters relating to skill and training needs by—

(i) identifying current and future skill needs; and

(ii) developing strategic training plans to assist the industry to meet those needs; and

(iii) promoting training that will meet those needs to employers and employees; and

(d) develop arrangements for the collective representation of employees in the governance of the organisation.

Because industry training is defined in the Act as 'systematic training, provided for people *employed in an industry*' (emphasis added), ITOs originally paid little attention to schools and their students in order to focus on workers in industry employment. In recent years, this approach has changed as many ITOs have recognised that skills leadership includes engaging with schools to ensure that students are aware of industry training options that might become part of their learning and career pathways. In a recent publication, for example, the Industry Training Federation (ITF, 2010, p. 6) has highlighted that working with schools and school students is an area where ITOs, with government support, could deliver further value by:

- Supporting the connection of schools with industry and sectors.
- Supporting secondary students' transitions to tertiary study and work, including providing information about study and work options.
- Developing qualifications that provide vocational education and training pathways for secondary students.
- Developing customised programmes and resources for secondary students, and expanding existing programmes.

Thus, there has been a movement towards greater connections between employer groups and education institutions, both at the secondary and the tertiary level. Each of the following chapters draws on material obtained in the key informant interviews to examine different parts of employer-led channels. The focus of the EEL research programme is on the young person in transition, and so chapter 3 begins the discussion by reporting on comments that were made in the interviews about students and career guidance.

Chapter 3

Students and Career Guidance

The international literature review carried out by the EEL research team concluded with the following observation (Higgins *et al*, 2008, p. 49):

> The recent developments described above in the education, sociology, indigenous studies and economics literatures tend to reinforce each other. At their collective centre is the young person, conceptualised as a dynamic individual who is continuously constructing self identities in diverse contexts, discovering and developing their personal abilities, making purposeful choices that are influenced by perceived and actual social, economic and cultural constraints, and engaging with education and employment systems in their schools, in their workplaces, in their local communities and in their countries.

People interviewed for this project often echoed this placing of the young person at the centre of the issue, expressed in different ways. Five participants from education providers and the government sector argued strongly that career guidance should aim to help young people discover and develop their *whole* person, and not simply vocational or professional skills. Four of the participants drawn from employer groups commented that any initiatives in career education must be valuable for the students, and there was some concern that education institutions are sometimes so focused on their financial incentives that they lose sight of providing quality programmes to young people. Four people mentioned the importance of pastoral care of students, particularly for young people studying part-time for trades qualifications (generally not explicitly funded by public training subsidies). Another emphasised the importance of recognising diversity among young people and being sensitive about different choices made by each individual.

There was a constant theme throughout the interviews expressing concern about those young people who become disengaged from education and skills development in their early teens. This is a longstanding policy concern; see, for example, OECD (2008, pp. 9-10). The general perception was that a significant number of young New Zealanders find that their learning environment at school does not cater well to their particular abilities and potential, and this contributes to their disengagement from learning. Addressing this outcome would reduce wasted talent and produce lots of positive externalities in helping teenagers 'find their feet'. In such cases, it was suggested that blurring the distinction between school and work could be very beneficial, particularly through the use in schools of 'context-oriented' or 'authentic' learning relevant to employment prospects. It was further suggested that this should not be a residual option for students identified as not coping in the classroom, but rather should be regarded as part of the range of positive choices open to all students.

In this context, there was general support that students can benefit from making direct links with employers, or learning about employer expectations, early in their secondary and tertiary studies. Some tertiary education providers reported that they arrange for employers to speak to their first-year classes for this purpose. Such links can help motivate study and encourage independent learning based on good planning, and may also help students to consider what activities they might engage in outside their studies in order to develop diverse skills that are valuable for their career aspirations.

Two general sets of comments were made about young people in transition by participants from across the spectrum of employers, industry training organisations, universities and institutes of polytechnics. The first set emphasised the importance of stimulating young people to *explore* their potential capabilities and to *imagine* a range of different possibilities for their future pathways in education, employment and other activities. This was presented as an essential element of professional career advice, often with an additional comment that the earlier the better. Several respondents claimed that many secondary students in New Zealand miss out on this step either because their advisers are not professionally trained in career advice or because the advisers work in an environment that is weighted towards a particular pathway (e.g. university education) at the expense of others (e.g. education in the trades).

The second set of general comments emphasised the importance of preparing trustworthy career education resources targeted at young people, particularly with the aim of helping young persons to consider a full range of different options. The Career Services website at *www.careers.org.nz* was cited by many respondents as an excellent example. Some of the people interviewed were concerned that young people in secondary schools can receive a large amount of material that is essentially marketing by tertiary education providers, rather than a balanced account of the full picture. Related to this concern was a complaint that career expos tend to be dominated by educators. Others were not so worried by this concern, arguing for example that young people understand that marketing is marketing. This contrary view tended to suggest that it is important for students to search out a range of different sources of information about their options. Several respondents from industry training organisations and from institutes of technology advised that they had introduced recent initiatives to improve the quality of their marketing into schools.

Three participants in the study suggested that a large number of young people leave school with no appreciation of the potential value of good professional career advice and guidance. It was suggested that there is an historical reason for this. Students who intend to pursue a career such as medicine, engineering, science or law need to plan their course of study carefully, and so it is generally accepted that the bright students at school need career advice. The National Administration Guidelines for schools in New Zealand require schools to pay 'particular emphasis on specific career guidance for those students who have been identified by the school as being at risk of leaving school unprepared for the transition to the workplace or further education/training' (MoE, 2009a, NAG 1f), and so it is generally accepted that struggling students at school need career advice. As a consequence, it was suggested that many students in the middle of the scholastic range regard themselves as neither struggling nor very bright, and so therefore think they do not need career guidance. There was a perception reported in some of the interviews that an under-resourced careers office in a school may reinforce this view by devoting little time to this 'middle group' of students each year.

The danger is that students who do not value career guidance may 'drift' into a course of study without developing effective career management skills and with little contact with employers. Some of these students will not seek career advice until late in their studies, at which point they may regret the options they had not thought to consider. Two interviewees from the tertiary education sector commented that students who at the end of their study come to regret their education choices typically did not make those choices for themselves, but were steered into a particular path by family, teachers, friends or unrepresentative experiences in part-time work while still at school. Others commented that a structured gap year between secondary and tertiary education may be better than simply drifting into further study.

Consequently, a strong theme to come through the interviews was the suggestion that personal career education is important for everyone. Career education is different from career advice or guidance; see the definitions in chapter 6 below. It involves the young person learning career management skills, sometimes called developing career literacy, or career maturity. These skills include knowing how to judge the reliability of careers material and how to access independent advice when it is needed. They include knowing the importance of revisiting education choices early in a course of study, and not simply drifting or becoming disengaged if the course is discovered to not match the person's talents. They include an ability to make decisions that consider long-term aspirations as well as short-term goals.

Chapter 4

Employers and Industry Training Organisations

Chapter 2 noted that there has been a movement towards greater connections between employer groups and education institutions. There was a wide range of opinions expressed about the willingness of employers to be involved in career education. Starting at the positive end of this range, nine participants stated that employers are generally keen to be involved, although this view was sometimes qualified by adding a phrase such as 'in our small or rural community'. At the other end of the range, five participants reported that in their experience employers are typically reluctant or unable to be involved, especially when a fragmented industry is comprised of mostly small to medium-sized enterprises.

Eight participants expressed a view somewhere between the two ends of the range, suggesting that employers will become involved if (a) they are provided with a reason for involvement, and (b) their time is used efficiently with clear boundaries on the extent of their commitment. Examples of reasons to be involved include: raising the profile of their industry/business among students; having first access to an institution's talented graduates; and to address persistent or projected skill shortages in their workplace.

Half of the interviews (15 out of 30) included comments that were supportive of more links or stronger partnerships between secondary schools and local employers, with some being particularly forceful in their opinion that this would be valuable for students (and for their transition pathways) and for the involved employers. These advocates generally recognised that employers and educators 'speak different languages' and have different needs and expectations. Six of the interviewees suggested that 'brokered relationships' would therefore work best, in which a specialist consultant or organisation ensures that any initiatives successfully promote the objectives of everyone involved.

A New Zealand example of a system for brokered school-employer relationships is 'The EDAL Way', recipient of the 2004 International Global Best Award, awarded by the International Partnership Network in the United Kingdom (see *www.the-edal-way.co.nz/*). This is a six stage relationship development process for business and education that assists schools and businesses to research and develop relationships with each other in a way that ensures value for both the company and the school.

Another New Zealand example is the INSTEP programme operated by Priority One, which is the economic development agency covering Tauranga and the Western Bay of Plenty (see *www.priorityone.co.nz/about_western_bay_of_plenty/INSTEP.asp*). The INSTEP programme describes itself as providing valuable links between business and education and exposes local secondary school students, their teachers, parents and principals to examples of successful business practice within its region. It goes on to explain that its aim is to ensure students become motivated and inspired to achieve their entrepreneurial goals through seeing relevance in what they learn at school, and expanding their options before leaving school. The programme is overseen by a steering group of employers and educators that meets once a year to guide the annual plan. The coordinator is responsible for maintaining connections with businesses, employer groups, local government, school principals, careers advisors, subject teachers and individual students to organise a series of events and networks each year.

A third New Zealand example is the City of Manukau Education Trust (COMET; see its website at *www.comet.org.nz*). COMET was established in 1999 by Manukau City Council as a charitable trust. It has a number of strategic themes, including: working together to support schools; working together so that young people have effective and supported transitions from school; and business and schools working together. In 2009, COMET operated three specific programmes under the third of those themes: a Principal For A Day event; six pilot projects with schools in Manukau funded under the government's Education for Enterprise (E4E) programme, and the COMET Authentic Learning Initiative to connect teachers and curriculum leaders in schools into opportunities to partner with a business or community organisation to design learning opportunities for students. At the time of writing this report, COMET is working on establishing a Centre for School-Business Relationships.

Several interviews gave examples of existing programmes for linking employers and schools. Twelve people commented that Gateway (a government funded initiative to support Years 11-13 students undertaking learning and assessment in the workplace; see TEC, 2010) is a good programme. Schools often organise visits by groups of their students to employers (e.g. work choice days; 'Outstanding in the Field' farm days; organised visits to business clusters; or industry taster days) or invite visits from employers to relevant classes. As noted above, some were concerned that careers expos tend to be dominated by educators, but it was also mentioned that some schools and regions are organising expos led by business or industry sectors.

Five interviews suggested that a school might set up an advisory committee of its local employers, or host a school breakfast for this group, to strengthen linkages with the school's business community. Positive mention was made of the 'Principal for a Day' scheme in which a business leader shadows a school principal for a day (see, for example, the COMET day at *www.comet.org.nz/wawcs0143754/ln-principal-for-a-day.html*, and a Waikato example can be seen at *www.smartwaikato.co.nz/page/10-a-day-as-principal*).

Chapter 2 noted that Industry Training Organisations (ITOs) are created by industry to provide leadership on matters relating to skill and training needs. Consequently, people in the interviews commented that there are generally no serious issues about education employment linkages for people who are undergoing training under ITO supervision. The qualifications are intended to meet industry needs, and the trainees are in employment (and so connected directly to employers). People who ask an ITO about career pathways in a sector can be referred to industry employers, or their websites, for reliable information and advice.

There is one major caveat to this positive assessment, however, which concerns how young people in schools obtain information about skills-based career opportunities in the industries covered by ITOs. In some sectors, for example, employers are reluctant to employ young people straight from school, and so there may be no natural pathway for a young person to learn about the sector while at school, especially if the people in the school's careers office are also unfamiliar with training and employment opportunities in the sector. All of the interviews with people in the ITO sector described major investments by ITOs in preparing resources and programmes for secondary schools. Almost all of these descriptions were accompanied by a comment that this work receives no direct funding from government.

At the most general level, ITOs have prepared promotional material on their industry for distribution in schools (including assisting Career Services with information for its website and participating in events like the annual conference of the Careers Advisors and Transition Educations Association Aotearoa). In some cases, this material has been prepared because

industry leaders have been concerned that students, parents and teachers have a poor understanding of the range of opportunities available to skilled people within the industry. This material is not subject to formal quality assurance, but is overseen by industry leaders whose reputations would be affected if the material included misleading claims. One participant commented that his ITO has to be careful not to overpromise to school students since firms in its industry typically do not employ school leavers directly.

Some ITOs have adopted a brokering role in helping schools organise contacts with local industries. The Electrotechnology Industry Training Organisation (ETITO), for example, has set up Bright Sparks, which is a virtual on-line community of about 2000 school students supported by knowledgeable mentors from industry (see *www.brightsparks.org.nz/*). This initiative includes the annual Bright Sparks competition 'to develop those students who are destined to be our nation's future engineers, electricians and programmers while they're still in school'. In 2009 the ETITO coordinated a day in Christchurch in which six schools nominated four students from their year 12 class to visit two workplaces where they were involved in some practical hands-on activities and shared discussions over lunch.

Another example is OASIS (Offering Assistance to Students in School) operated by the Hotel Hospitality Standards Institute to show students the potential of a career in the hospitality industry. Under this programme, schools can obtain advice and assistance on getting in touch with local hospitality professionals and modern apprentices who can provide students with an insight into employment opportunities and what goes into running a successful business.

At a more detailed level, ITOs have begun developing unit standards suitable for delivery by secondary schools and have set up processes for delivering and moderating these standards. The New Zealand Qualifications Authority reports that ITOs are responsible for about two-thirds of the standards on the National Qualifications Framework, but the movement into designing standards for delivery in schools is relatively recent.

In some cases, individual ITOs have combined in order to produce materials for schools. An outstanding example is the Built Environment Training Alliance (BETA), comprised of the Building and Construction ITO, the Creative Trades ITO, the New Zealand Flooring ITO, InfraTrain (ITO for the infrastructure industries), the Joinery ITO, and the Plumbing, Gasfitting, Drainlaying and Roofing ITO. BETA has created the BConstructive programme, which involves two qualifications that can be offered at years 11 and 12 in schools providing students with the skills and knowledge to springboard into any career in the construction industry (see *www.bconstructive.co.nz/*). Five participants in the interviews reported that pre-trades courses of this type are generally becoming more important in some career pathways, particularly where it is difficult to find employment directly from school. There was a suggestion that ITOs connected to the primary sector might combine to produce suitable learning and marketing material for school students.

Chapter 5

Universities and Institutes of Technology or Polytechnics

The New Zealand tertiary education system includes eight universities (Auckland University of Technology, Lincoln University, Massey University, University of Auckland, University of Canterbury, University of Otago, University of Waikato and Victoria University of Wellington) and twenty institutes of technology or polytechnics (Aoraki Polytechnic, Bay of Plenty Polytechnic, Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology, Eastern Institute of Technology, Manukau Institute of Technology, Nelson Marlborough Institute of Technology, Northland Polytechnic, Open Polytechnic, Otago Polytechnic, Southern Institute of Technology, Tai Poutini Polytechnic, Tairawhiti Polytechnic, Telford Rural Polytechnic, Unitec New Zealand, Universal College of Learning, Waiariki Institute of Technology, Waikato Institute of Technology, Wellington Institute of Technology, Western Institute of Technology Taranaki and Whitireia Community Polytechnic).

These public institutions play two important roles in employer-led channels for assisting young people make good education-employment linkages. First, they devote considerable human and financial resources to providing material to potential recruits into their education programmes. This includes presentations in schools, interviews with individuals, provision of written and audio-visual material, dedicated webpages and hosting of campus visits. Second, these institutions provide career education and career guidance services to students enrolled in their courses. These services are available to students at any stage, but there is often a particular demand from students in their final year of study or immediately after graduation as they search for employment related to their new qualification.

A question addressed in the interviews was whether information distributed by these tertiary institutions to prospective students (in printed give-away material or on the institution's website) undergoes any formal quality assurance process. The answer is generally not. The contents are prepared on the advice of professional people (typically the academic staff involved in the programme being marketed) and so are generally considered by the recruitment offices to be reliable. Participants commented that if an error was pointed out to them, the mistake would be immediately corrected since the reputation of the institution depends among other things on the quality of its material.

An innovative web-based programme by the University of Otago seeks to stimulate the imagination of prospective students to consider the full range of programmes available at the University. Called *Otago Choice*, it invites the user to answer a number of binary questions about their skills and interests and then uses an algorithm designed by one of its staff members (see Hanson and Ombler, 2009) to rank 105 Bachelor degree subjects offered at the university according to how well they match those skills and interests.

The people interviewed from recruitment offices confirmed that they maintain very strong links with careers offices in secondary schools, sometime using former students of a school now enrolled in the tertiary institution to help connect with the next cohort of school leavers. These links tend to be regional for the institutes of technology and national for the universities. The recruitment officers were clear that they do not attempt to offer career advice or course advice to prospective students. Rather, their role is to market programmes as best they can, with some courses (especially the professional courses) being easier to market than

others. One participant thought there may be some 'gilding of the lily' in the marketing. Printed give-away material is necessarily summary in nature, and does not aim to provide in-depth information. As noted earlier, one person reported that marketing material is easily recognised as such by young people. If a potential student asks for career advice, he or she is referred to the institution's careers office, since that is where the qualified advisors reside.

Once a student arrives at the institution and begins a course of study, there are four key moments at which they may have some contact with the institution's careers office. First, the careers office will be involved in orientation events associated with welcoming the new student. The office may host seminars on aspects of career education, and will distribute material on the services that it can provide to any student during their studies. This typically includes a sequence of career related workshops on topics such as preparing a CV or presenting well in an interview, plus opportunities for one-on-one career advice and guidance. In some institutions, the careers office will also arrange for visits from local business people to speak to first-year students about employment opportunities associated with their course.

Second, students who arrive at an institution may learn early in their studies that the education choice they made on enrolment needs revisiting. One person suggested, for example, that many students who are attracted to enrol in accounting discover in the first semester that this subject does not suit their skills or interests, contributing to a very high failure rate in the first-year accounting course. Such students are strongly encouraged to speak to the careers office so that they can go through a formal process of career planning to search for a better match in their education choices. In some institutions, students are invited with a broadcast email in the first weeks of their study to reflect on whether they are in the right programme, and to seek advice if they have any doubts. This is likely to become more common as public funding begins to place greater emphasis on completions rather than enrolments.

Third, during the programme of study, there may be requirements for students to participate in some form of work-based learning (WBL). This can range from a specified period of practical work experience through to a module in the programme that has formal learning objectives and assessment but which takes place off-campus in a workplace. In both cases, the careers office may be involved in coordinating the WBL programme and managing the partnership between the education institution and the participating employers.

Fourth, students who are moving towards the end of their course may seek assistance from the careers office in preparing for employment. The careers office will host employer recruitment visits to the campus, and will give students access to information about job vacancies. Seven of New Zealand's eight universities use a common web-based portal for this latter purpose (*https://nzunicareerhub.ac.nz/*). Since the student is about to graduate, the focus of individual interviews with careers staff tends to be on how to search for employment opportunities that match the student's new qualification. The assistance provided by the careers office may continue after the student has left the institution.

The functions described in the previous paragraphs mean that the careers office is often a strategic asset in a tertiary education institution's portfolio of services. To be effective, the office must be equipped to:

- maintain a network of strong relationships with regional and national employers;
- manage processes and events for connecting employers and students; and
- offer professional career advice, guidance and education to students.

People interviewed from these offices for this project generally considered that they are equipped for these tasks, although two reported that they were working on improving their information technology systems for managing the institution's relationships with employers. In all cases, staff providing career guidance are professionally qualified and affiliated with a professional body (typically the Career Development Association of New Zealand; see http://www.cdanz.org.nz/). Several people emphasised that this is important, since their professional ethical standards mean that they are required to provide *impartial* advice to clients that is not influenced by any marketing goals of their institution (or of a particular programme within the institution). This is understood and appreciated by their student clients, who sometimes report that their academic course advisors seem unwilling to present a full range of options. A research project based on 49 focus groups involving 419 student participants by the Tertiary Education Commission has recently reported a similar finding (TEC, 2009, p. 6):

> Careers advisors were a commonly accessed source of information on tertiary education options. Some students said they were more trusting of advice from independent careers advisors because they did not promote specific programmes or providers. Their ability to explain clear pathways both within tertiary education and from education to employment was deemed particularly valuable.

The interviews revealed four areas where it was suggested there is potential for systematic improvements. The first area concerns curriculum design. Many tertiary institutions now have employer advisory boards (or similar title) that are invited to provide feedback on a study programme's contents and performance. Nevertheless, an institution's careers office builds up a lot of experience through its networks in understanding employer expectations that would be valuable in designing education and training programmes. It was therefore suggested that institutions could make more use of this experience and those networks than typically happens at present, to strengthen feedback from employers to educators.

The second area concerns the attitude of students to career education when they arrive for tertiary education. It was suggested that this is less of an issue in institutes of technology and polytechnics, since most of their students enrol because they want to either develop or change their current career path. Also a relatively small group of their enrolments come directly from school. In universities, students arrive in order to continue 'higher education' (to use one of its traditional names) and a significant number of these can 'drift' into their course of study without realising the value of thinking about developing effective career management skills (see the wider discussion in chapter 3 above). This does not mean to suggest that tertiary education should always be employment-focused, but careers advisors in the interviews did say that some of their clients do later regret the time it took for them to seek career guidance or to learn techniques for framing their career choices.

The third area concerns the tracking of the achievements of different programmes in preparing their graduates for employment. Marketing material often includes examples of high profile graduates that serve as a model for others to emulate, but it is rare for further information to be provided on how representative these examples are of all graduate experience. The interviews included comments ranging from 'all entrants in this programme are given a guarantee that they will find employment at its conclusion' to 'large numbers of students in this programme are being trained for no job'. Four people suggested that there should be published data on completion rates and graduate outcomes for tertiary education institutions (such as the 'employability performance indicator' used with some controversy in the United Kingdom) so that potential students can incorporate this information in making their choices.

The fourth area concerns perceptions that career advice given to young people in New Zealand (both formal guidance by careers advisors and informal advice by family and friends) generally undervalues trades education in favour of university education. This concern was specifically raised by twelve people (representing all five categories in table 2 on page 4) in the context of career advice in secondary schools. The above cited research project by the Tertiary Education Commission also supported this finding (TEC, 2009, p. 6):

> Some students felt that schools and careers advisors over-emphasised the option of university study and needed to provide more information about other forms of tertiary education. Some of these students mentioned that schools and careers advisors needed to encourage students to participate in the tertiary education suited to their learning style and appropriate to their pathways from secondary school. Many participants undertaking industry and modern apprenticeship training learned about training options through their employer or other students and felt there needed to be better promotion of the full range of available study options.

The discussions suggested that four factors have contributed to this situation. First, careers advisors and secondary school teachers are professionally educated and so their experience is generally weighted towards university education. Second, parents of the current generation lived through the post-1984 economic reforms that had a strong adverse impact on workers employed in the trades. Third, there is a perception that universities have had bigger budgets and been much more successful that institutes of technology or polytechnics in marketing their programmes through the careers offices in secondary schools. Fourth, it was suggested that national economic strategies emphasising 'the knowledge economy' have tended to focus more on intellectual innovations than on the rewards that are available to innovative people skilled in the trades, with the result that many schools have come to regard their percentage of school leavers going on to university as an implicit key performance indicator.

There have been some initiatives to address this perceived imbalance in career advice. A number of regional communities, for example, organise an annual ceremony in which civic and business leaders recognise and celebrate young people who have completed a trade qualification. Several people from the ITO sector mentioned the Inzone bus (see *www.inzone.co.nz/*), which is a roadshow travelling around New Zealand schools to offer students access to high-tech audio-visual material on career opportunities in the trades. Two participants commented that schools are now recognising the value of trades education more than was the case a decade ago. At the national level, there are moves to allow merit and excellence to be recognised for school students studying what are currently offered only as unit standards related to the trades.

Chapter 6

Secondary Schools and Career Education

It is important to emphasise that the 'employer-led channels' theme of this research did not incorporate interviews with key informants from school communities. Nevertheless, almost all participants in this part of the research reported significant dealings with schools either directly or with young people soon after they leave school. Consequently the interviews provided valuable feedback on how career education in secondary schools is perceived by outsiders closely involved in helping young people in transition.

The first point to make is that the interviews were replete with examples of recent initiatives in schools that participants described as exciting and valuable for students. The development of unit standards for trades education, the development of school-business partnerships for project-based learning, the investment by some schools in specialist education facilities (tool making, fabricating, construction, hospitality, primary sector, etc.), the hosting of employer-led careers expos and the development of trades academies in schools were examples favourably mentioned by three or more people. There were several general statements commenting that careers advisors in schools are doing okay in what is a difficult job, and are typically enthusiastic about cooperating in projects that they think will benefit their students (see also Vaughan and Gardiner, 2007, p. 82).

Participants in the interviews recognised the problem of 'information overload' in schools, with some adding that this makes it difficult to get their particular message across to students. This is a sensitive issue; one participant commented that it is not the role of a careers office in school to become a quasi recruitment agency for local employers, ITOs or tertiary educators. Participants reported that they were aware they need to provide different resources for different parts of school communities, such as the principal, heads of departments, subject teachers, the careers office, parents of students and the students themselves.

People spoke highly of some schools where the careers office is a strong team of qualified professionals offering a range of skills and services to their students, with full support from the principal. There was also a strong theme running through the interviews, however, that not all secondary students have valuable experiences with their careers office. The most common explanation was that it is impossible for any individual careers advisor to know everything, and so counsellors who rely on their personal knowledge to give advice will not be able to introduce their students to the full range of available options.

Possible ways to address this issue can be grouped into two types of response. The first group of responses suggested that careers offices in schools need more resources that are ring-fenced for providing better career advice and guidance. Three people suggested, for example, that schools should be funded to employ a Vocational Dean or some equivalent title to manage the full range of services associated with education employment linkages in the school. One person suggested a national scheme for funding short-term teacher placements in industry. Another suggested more professional development opportunities for careers staff. Nine people commented very favourably on Career Services as an important resource that could be more used in schools (particularly their 0800 number). There were also some favourable mentions of recent national programmes such as Gateway, STAR, Education for Enterprise (E4E) and Creating Pathways and Building Lives (CPaBL).

The second group of responses raised a more fundamental critique of the role of careers offices in the New Zealand education system. The role is set out in National Administration Guidelines (NAG) for school administration, which state that each board of trustees is required, among other things, to (MoE, 2009a, NAG 1f):

> provide appropriate career education and guidance for all students in year 7 and above, with a particular emphasis on specific career guidance for those students who have been identified by the school as being at risk of leaving school unprepared for the transition to the workplace or further education/training.

The NAG indicates that schools must provide career *education* and career *guidance,* but these are two very different tasks. This is explained in the Ministry of Education's advice and support to schools (MoE, 2009b, p. 6; see also McMahon, 2004, pp. 56-57 for similar definitions using Australian sources):

> **A career** is the sequence and variety of work roles, paid and unpaid, that a person undertakes throughout a lifetime. More broadly, 'career' embraces life roles in the home and the community, leisure activities, learning and work. Work, learning and life, though sometimes distinct, are closely intertwined. Everyone has a career.
>
> **Career education** consists of planned, progressive learning experiences that help students develop career management competencies that will assist them to manage their lives.
>
> **Career guidance** provides individualised interactions to help students move from a general understanding of life and work to a specific understanding of the life, learning and work options that are open to them. It helps individuals or small groups to better understand themselves and their needs, confront challenges, resolve conflicts, develop new perspectives and make progress. Career guidance is carried out by staff with specialist training. This may include deans and teachers providing pastoral care.

Against this background, some participants in the interviews argued that it is inappropriate for a person in a public institution dealing with young people to offer career *guidance* if he or she is not qualified or not accredited as a professional counsellor. These participants commented that careers advisors in tertiary institutions, in ACC and in Career Services are required to be qualified (or to be in the process of gaining a qualification) and affiliated to a professional organisation, and this same standard should be applied in schools. In particular, it was argued that a person who is qualified and accredited as a teacher but not as a careers counsellor should be restricted to providing or facilitating career *education*. Note that the MoE (2009b) advice above recommends that career guidance be carried out by staff 'with specialist training'. One person in the interviews argued strongly that this principle should be enshrined in statute to protect school students from well-intentioned but unqualified staff giving them unaccountable advice.

There was further discussion about how a secondary school careers office might facilitate career education in schools, centred on the idea that career education should be embedded in the curriculum. This idea is also developed in a recent discussion paper published by Career Services (Hodgetts, 2009). In this model, a careers office helps subject teachers include career-relevant material in their teaching (the science teacher might give an assignment on science careers), or include projects designed in collaboration with local employers. Staff in the careers office and subject teachers would focus on helping students to learn how they themselves can access and assess reliable career information and advice, rather than the staff and teachers attempting to provide that information and advice themselves (unless qualified as counsellors to do so).

In three cases, the participant commented that they consider New Zealand is falling behind countries like Australia and the United Kingdom on this matter. In the United Kingdom, the Department for Children, Schools and Families has published *Quality Standards for Young People's Information, Advice and Guidance (IAG)*, including the following three standards (DCSF, 2007, p. 5):

10. Staff providing information, advice and guidance are appropriately qualified, work to relevant professional standards and receive continuing professional development.
11. Information, advice and guidance services are regularly and systematically monitored, reviewed and evaluated, and actions are taken to improve services in response to the findings.
12. Processes for commissioning impartial information, advice and guidance services are effective and result in services that meet the needs of parents/carers and young people.

In Australia, the Federal Government has been involved in initiatives to strengthen the professionalism of career development practitioners for nearly a decade (McMahon, 2004). A lengthy consultation commissioned through the Career Industry Council of Australia by the Department of Education, Science and Training produced Professional Standards for Australian Career Development Practitioners in 2006, revised in 2007, which will be mandatory from 1 January 2012 (see *www.cica.org.au/*).

Chapter 7

Conclusion

There was considerable support in the interviews for the proposition that New Zealand needs to create better systems for careers education, and for improving employer-led channels of information to young people. There is evidence that peak organisations of employers have become more connected to education institutions, motivated in part by serious skills shortages that emerged over the last decade. Business New Zealand is engaged in submissions and media releases on education and training issues (*www.businessnz.org.nz/issues/204*) and industry organisations are participating in employer reference groups set up by tertiary education institutions to provide feedback on their programmes. Industry Training Organisations, both individually and in sector clusters, are preparing material for secondary schools, both to raise the profile of their industries among students and their teachers and to design and moderate unit standards taught within schools.

As noted in chapter 2, the tradition in New Zealand has been for careers information about industries to be collected and distributed by a government agency, currently Career Services. In 2007, international expert Professor Tony Watts was invited to undertake a review of this agency. The opening paragraph of the Watts report described Career Services in glowing terms (Watts, 2007, p. 9; the reference is to OECD, 2004, p. 102):

> Career Services in New Zealand is the most fully-integrated version of a national multi-channel all-age service in the world that is dedicated to career planning support. The OECD Career Guidance Policy Review suggested that 'the priority for policy makers in most OECD countries should be to create separate, and appropriate, occupational and organisational structures to deliver career guidance'. In organisational terms, Career Services represents a prime exemplar of the recommended approach.

Similarly positive remarks were made by participants in the interviews for this present report, with no contrary criticisms. Thus there is widespread recognition, nationally and internationally, that Career Services is a superb source of reliable career information, advice and guidance. The organisation has set up strong internal systems of quality control, both for monitoring that it is meeting professional standards in its advice and guidance and for ensuring that its published material is assessed for quality assurance. A theme throughout the interviews was that Career Services should be more widely used. Its website is well patronised, but it was suggested that there is scope for secondary and tertiary students to be more aware of its careers guidance services through the 0800 222 733 phone number.

More generally, another theme in the interviews was a concern that large numbers of young New Zealanders undervalue the positive benefits that can be achieved with good quality career guidance. An explanation for this was a suggestion that careers offices in schools under pressure due to limited resources may focus their attention on the very bright students (who need advice on subjects they must study to enter into careers such as medicine, engineering, science or law) and on students who are struggling (following a requirement in the National Administration Guidelines issues to boards of trustees). If this is the case, it may have the unintended consequence that those students who are neither struggling at school nor aspiring to enter restricted professional courses may come to the view that career guidance would not be beneficial for themselves.

Again more generally, there was a strong theme in the interviews supporting further development of careers education in secondary and in tertiary education institutions. This included support for integrating careers education within the curriculum, which is consistent with recent reflections published by Career Services (Hodgetts, 2009). In the case of secondary schools, this was often accompanied by a view that people in school careers offices who are qualified and registered as teachers but not as counsellors should restrict themselves to facilitating career education, pointing students to professionals (for example, through Career Services) for guidance where appropriate.

A fourth theme concerned finding ways to better manage relationships between educators and employers. At the tertiary level, this included reports of projects to develop information technology solutions for strengthening relationships with local and national businesses. At the secondary level, it included a proposal that there is an important role for specialist brokers to ensure that schools and businesses both meet their objectives in agreeing to enter into a partnership. Examples were provided where this role is performed by an Industry Training Organisation, an economic development agency, a local government community trust and by a private consultant.

Finally, a consistent theme in all the interviews was the first one discussed in this report. At the centre of careers education is the young person at a key stage in his or her personal and social development. Participants emphasised again and again the importance of supporting effective systems for helping young people to imagine different possibilities for their career development, and for helping them to develop skills for exploring and assessing a full range of opportunities as they construct their own career pathways.

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Appendix 1: Information Provided to Participants

Research on Employer-Led Channels for Supporting Young People Make Good Education Employment Linkages

Introduction

The research programme on education employment linkages is a five-year study funded by the Foundation for Research Science and Technology. The programme is focused on systems for supporting young people make good education employment linkages as they move from school to tertiary education and work. Our work is being guided by an external reference group made up of representatives from seven government agencies. In our first two years we have completed an international literature review on this topic and prepared overview maps of current support systems in New Zealand. Further information can be obtained from our dedicated website at *www.eel.org.nz/*.

Employer Led Channels

The research programme is divided into four streams, addressing systems of support in school-communities, in regional communities, in Māori and Pasifika communities, and in employer led channels. Professor Paul Dalziel of the AERU at Lincoln University is leading the research stream on employer led channels, aiming to answer the following question.

> Under our current systems, how can young people (and their advisors) access reliable and comprehensive information about employment opportunities as they make their education choices, paying particular attention to the roles of Universities, Institutes of Technology and Polytechnics, and Industry Training Organisations?

Stakeholder Interviews

To answer this question, Professor Dalziel is asking stakeholders in business and education to participate in one-on-one interviews with him at a time and location that is convenient to each participant (normally in their workplace office). Each interview is anticipated to take about 45 minutes. The report will list the names of the people who agree for an interview (unless anonymity is requested), but nothing from the interviews will be published that could identify the person or his or her institution.

The purpose of the interviews is to gain insight into the topics listed on the next page of this invitation. The report will include proposals for how current support systems in New Zealand might be improved, to be developed further in year 4 of the EEL research programme.

Participants in the interviews will be sent a copy of the report in draft, and will be given the opportunity to offer comments and suggestions for change in advance of its publication. If you have any questions about this research project, please contact Professor Paul Dalziel at *Paul.Dalziel@lincoln.ac.nz* or on his mobile phone at 021 0607 150.

Semi-Structured Guide for Interviews

(Employer-Led Channels)

1. From your own position in your organisation, what would you say are the general strengths and weaknesses in the way employer groups and education institutions are currently linked to each other?

2. What information do you think young people in secondary and tertiary institutions need to know about employment opportunities as they make training and education choices?

3. What information does your organisation provide to young people making training and education choices?

4. Do you have quality assurance procedures for the information you provide?

5. Do you think there are any gaps in the information received by young people making training and education choices?

6. What careers guidance or careers education are young people able to access through your organisation?

7. Do you have quality assurance procedures for the careers guidance or careers education offered through your organisation?

8. Do you think there are any gaps in the careers guidance or careers education available to young people making training and education choices?

9. Do you have any suggestions about how we could improve our current systems for supporting young people make good education employment linkages?

Contact

If you have any questions about this research project, please contact Professor Paul Dalziel at *Paul.Dalziel@lincoln.ac.nz* or on his mobile phone at 021 0607 150.

Appendix 2: List of Participants

Chrissi Bollard	Manukau Institute of Technology
Robyn Bridges	University of Otago
Chris Bridgman	University of Canterbury
Michael Burgess	Employers and Manufacturers Association (Northern)
Allen Chang	City of Manukau Education Trust (COMET)
Andrew Coker	Priority One
Joanna Consedine	University of Canterbury
Mark Cumisky	University of Otago
Mark Dronjak	Hospitality Standards Institute
Nancy Dunlop	Auckland University of Technology
Penny Fenwick	New Zealand Vice-Chancellors' Committee
Dale Furbish	Auckland University of Technology
Andrew Giltrap	Otorohanga District Development Board
Dave Guerin	ITP New Zealand
Richard Hay	Southland Chamber of Commerce
Diana Hudson	Otago Southland Employers Association
Nyk Huntington	Industry Training Federation
Phil Ker	Otago Polytechnic
Brian Lane	Competenz
Graeme McClennan	Manukau Institute of Technology
Jen McCutcheon	The Correspondence School
John McWilliam	Electricity Supply Industry Training Organisation
Dean Muir	FITEC
Carrie Murdoch	Business New Zealand
Nicky Murray	Industry Training Federation
Phil O'Reilly	Business New Zealand
Lester Oakes	Career Services
Lyn Parlane	Priority One
Mina Patel	Auckland University of Technology
Kathleen Perry	AgricultureITO
Ross Petersen	Electrotechnology Industry Training Organisation
Gabrielle Riley	Electricity Supply Industry Training Organisation
Aaron Shackell-Smith	City of Manukau Education Trust (COMET)
Greg Simmonds	Priority One
Anna Smith	Southern Institute of Technology
David Trought	FITEC
Heather Trought	Auckland University of Technology
Stephen Walker	University of Otago
Dale Williams	Mayor of Otorohanga
Phil Williams	FITEC
Les Wilson	Building and Construction ITO